

## Medical Facts File

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### INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1992, Georgetown introduced the Medical Facts File to users of its electronic Knowledge Network of over 18 databases. The newly-developed database was designed by Georgetown as an online source for users seeking quick answers to medical queries. It emerged from the library's experience with commonly asked reference questions. The File functions as an "expert reference librarian" by anticipating questions and providing factual information and authoritative sources which users navigate themselves. Because information is so widely scattered and users are faced with barriers of time and access, special in-house files, such as the Medical Facts File, provide answers to information queries when "live" reference service is not available - evenings and weekends.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT

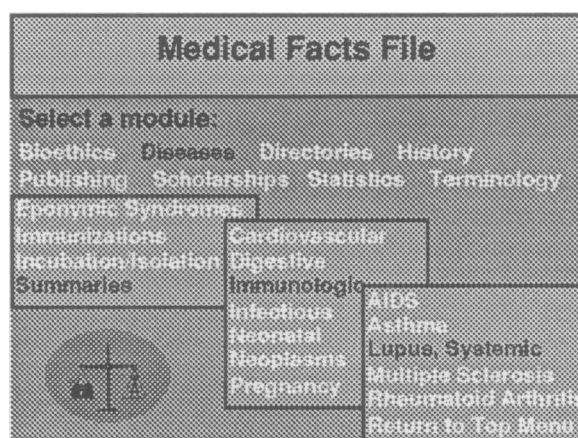
The Medical Facts File has eight modules that span topics covering bioethics, diseases, directories, history, publishing, scholarships, statistics, and terminology. Contents within each module provide summarized information, authoritative sources, synopses, and the full-text of special documents. It has been designed in a modular fashion to accommodate rapid expansion, facilitate annual updates, and encourage collaboration with librarians from other institutions.

### CLINICAL APPLICATIONS

#### Disease Module

Medical students frequently use the Disease Module during their clinical rotations when preparing online histories and physicals at the 25 MAClinical workstations, located throughout the Georgetown University Hospital and four affiliated hospitals. Students consult the Medical Facts File, and other Knowledge Network databases, when determining differential diagnoses and preparing treatment plans. Approximately 100 disease summaries are organized within 19 broad categories, and these include the most common discharge diagnoses for patients at the Georgetown University Hospital. Disease summaries provide information on incidence, clinical signs, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of each disease, in addition to a list of authoritative

sources, supplemental bibliographies, online databases, and patient information sources. A search sample is shown in the figure below.



### RESEARCH APPLICATIONS

#### Publishing Module

Faculty and staff involved in clinical and basic research use the Publishing Module when preparing journal articles, books or book chapters. Information is available on more than 100 journal titles, such as standard abbreviation, sponsor, editorial board, publisher, and complete instructions to authors. Users can read from the screen display, print, or download the information. Other information in this module includes multiple citation formats and style and usage examples.

### SYSTEM DESIGN AND USER ACCESS

The design of the File stresses ease of use and transparent navigation because the system goal is to provide self-service access to information and minimize the need for special training. The File is programmed in SYBASE and runs on a SUN SPARC 490. It can also operate on the DEC VAX minicomputer series and other microcomputer systems supported by SYBASE. The combined menu and multiple window approaches for user access emphasizes an easy user interface with intuitive searching mechanisms. Users have two search options: they can select a module and progress through various levels of specificity or they can enter a search term directly.